The Southern PATRIOT

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Discrimination Against Spanish-Speaking Americans in the Southwest

On May 28, 1949, the Corpus Christi, Texas, **Caller-Times** printed an article entitled, "Bodies of 14 South Texas War Dead Returned to U.S." Their names were Aquirre, Alvarado, Enriquez, Gomez, Garcia, Guerra, Hernandez, Picazo, Rodriquez and Salazar.

In a letter to the editor, Dr. Hector P. Garcia pointed out that 13 of the 14 "heroes" were Americans of Latin-American origin whose children would be segregated in Texas schools. "Did these 13 boys", writes Dr. Garcia, "like thousands of others die in vain? Did they die defending and believing a democratic principle which does not exist in the public schools of Texas?"

In a fine book, "North From Mexico", Carey McWilliams, noted authority on minority problems, has written the story of the tragic failure of democracy in the case of our Latin American population. This group numbering almost three million persons is concentrated in the Southwest, a million of them living in Texas, 250,000 or half of the population, in New Mexico, 120,000 in Arizona, 500,000 in California, and 90,000 in Colorado.

Hispanos are segregated in the Southwest by occupations, by residential location, in schools and churches, in motion picture houses and swimming pools. Shops in some communities advertise "White Trade Only", and in some Texas jails there are special visiting days for "Mexicans and Negroes". One author spent two years in a Southwest community dominated by "Anglos" without once seeing a Spanish-American at a social function.

MINE OKUBO. Courtesy Common Ground.

Dr. George I. Sanchez, of the University of Texas, writes of a boy scout troop ordered out of a public park because they were "Mexicans", of cemeteries that deny Mexicans the right of burial, of churches with signs reading "For Colored and Mexicans", and of Texas courthouses with signs which read, "For Whites-Mexicans Keep Out".

The great economic empire which has developed in the Southwest in the last 25 years was built largely upon Mexican common labor. With Oriental immigration cut off, and European immigration rigidly controlled by "quotas", large employers of labor looked to the South. From 1920 to 1930 close to a million Mexicans crossed the border. They did not immigrate so much as "return" to their friends and relatives.

Importance of Employment Pattern

It is the pattern of employment more than any other factor, writes Mr. McWilliams, which has been the major obstacle to any process of acculturation. Most of the immigrants were imported for particular jobs in particular places. They furnished from 60% to 90% of the common labor that built the railways, smelters, copper mines, sugar beet refineries, farm factories, large fruit and vegetable exchanges. The work was hard, often dirty, of a "dead-end" character with no opportunity for advancement.

Immigrants were purposely located in isolated **colonias** or colonies with little that could be called civilized living facilities.

In the 1930 census, out of a total population of nearly three million, only 5,400 Mexicans were employed in clerical jobs; 1,902 as teachers; 93 were lawyers and judges; and only 165 were physicians and surgeons.

As in the case of segregation of Negroes, the segregation of Mexicans has an economic base. Discrimination is "good business" for certain employers if not for the community as a whole.

Discriminatory Wage Rates

In 1944 the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers brought charges against three copper mining companies before the National War Labor Board for discrimination against Mexicans. The Board found two employment categories, one for "Anglo-American Males" and one for "Other Employees". The latter classification included all females, "Latin-Americans", Negroes, Filipinos, and Indians. When a Mexican with no experience was employed, he was classified as "common labor" and paid $5.21 per shift; but an Anglo-American with no experience was classified as a "helper" and paid $6.36.

Segregated Schools

The arbitrary pattern is employed of assigning all children with Spanish names to separate schools. Segregation is maintained not so much by legal methods as by default of any protest from Mexicans. In recent years this situation has changed. Mexicans have gone into the courts to test their rights. Altho no federal court in the South has yet ruled that segregation of Negro children in Jim Crow schools is unconstitutional, in California a federal judge has ruled that segregation of Mexican children in separate schools is illegal.

On March 2, 1945, citizen Gonzalo Mendez, a resident of Westminster, Orange County, California, filed suit in federal court against the county school officials. He was disturbed not so much by the fact that his three children were compelled to attend a shabby, separate, "Mexican" school, but because he did not want his children to grow up with hatred in their hearts for the children who went to the well-equipped school with the beautiful green lawns and shrubs.

The school authorities argued in court that the Mexicans were an "inferior" race, but confronted with irrefutable scientific evidence to the contrary, shifted their defense to an attack upon the Mexican children as "dirty" and unwashed.

(Continued on page 2)

NORTH FROM MEXICO, The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States, by Carey McWilliams; The People of America Series, Lippincott Co., New York, $4.00. The material in this article is based on Mr. McWilliams' important new book.

Spanish-Speaking Americans

(Continued from page 1)

On March 21, 1945 Judge Paul J. McCormick in a memorable opinion ruled that segregation violated the 14th Amendment, that it "deprived them (Mexican children) of a common cultural attitude . . . which is imperative for the perpetuation of American institutions and ideals", and fostered antagonisms. On April 14, 1947 this ruling was affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court. This case was the inspiration for similar action in many other communities.

Because of the treatment of Mexicans in the State of Texas, the Mexican government shut off the flow of labor so essential to certain industries in that state. Gov. Coke Stevenson thereupon established the Good Neighbor Commission with a proclamation calling upon all citizens to adopt a non-discriminatory policy toward "all persons of the Caucasian race", thus excluding Negroes from the good neighbor circle.

In The Texas Spectator for October 11, 1946, the writer, Hart Stilwell puts his finger on the heart of the Good Neighbor problem, and also on the nerve center of the "Mexican" or race problem. A newspaper man for 25 years, Mr. Stilwell writes that in all his career he had never heard of an Anglo-American serving one day in a penitentiary for killing a Latin-American.

"We can bring ten thousand Tipica Orchestras to Texas", writes Mr. Stilwell, "and send five thousand Rotary Clubs and Kiwanis Clubs and other goodwill delegations into Mexico, yet so long as the Mexican knows that he may be killed with impunity by any American who chooses to kill him, then all our talk about being good neighbors is merely paying lip service to a friendship we both know is a joke".

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TRENDS

Fascism, Birmingham Style

On June 10th, Mrs. Hugh McDanal was beaten in Birmingham; Steve Marshlar was threatened at nearby Brookside; on the 12th, 126 hooded men paraded in Tuscaloosa, home of the University of Alabama; on the 20th Clarke Stallworth, reporter for the Birmingham **Post**, was beaten at Sumiton, Walker County, adjoining Birmingham. All of these victims of robed mobs were white. They follow the bombings of three Negro homes in March and a reign of terror by Commissioner "Bull" Conner's police in which for an extended period a Negro was killed by police about every ten days.

A citizens committee of 500 is being organized, the legislature is taking steps to outlaw the Klan, Gov. Folsom has called state police into action and there is evidence that at long last a spontaneous movement of protest may come forward.

THE CULPRIT
—Harper, Birmingham Age-Herald

Five of the six Negro students who were denied admission to the University of Florida by the state Board of Control have appealed to the state supreme court to order their admission.

* * *

A student publication of the University of Florida polled 500 students on the issue of admitting Negroes. 284 favored admitting Negroes; 94 were opposed.

* * *

Thirteen of the seventeen regular faculty members of the School of Religion at Duke University, Durham, N. C., were recorded as favoring the admission of Negroes as "day students"; one abstained from voting. About one year ago 107 members of the student body of the School of Religion, 13 graduate students and 50 members of the Kappa Chi Ministerial Fraternity voted to admit Negroes.

LAW AND ORDER IN THE SOUTH
—Little, Nashville Tennessean

* * *

Following a U. S. District Court decision that the University of Kentucky must admit qualified Negro students to the graduate schools, President H. L. Donovan has announced that courses in law, pharmacy and engineering will be open to Negroes beginning this summer. The action was taken "to comply fully" with the federal court decision.

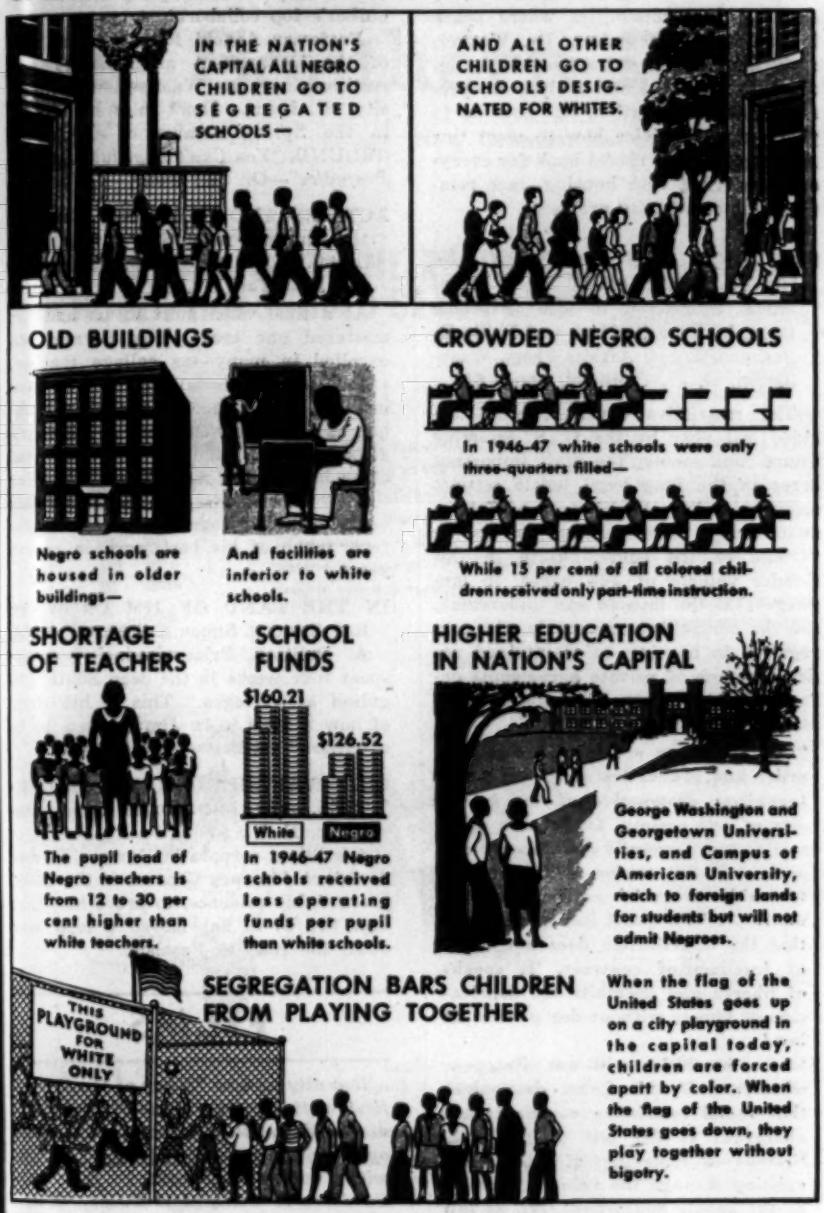
* * *

A bill sponsored by Sen. Kefauver of Tenn. to permit the voteless citizens of Washington to elect a city council was passed by the Senate on a voice vote. An amendment sponsored by Eastland of Miss. and Johnston of S. C., requiring a referendum on any change in the capital's segregation pattern was defeated 49-27. Voting against the amendment were Graham, N. C.; Kefauver, Tenn.; Neely, W. Va.; Pepper, Fla.; Thomas, Okla.

Free Assembly Maintained

On June 8 Judge J. Bernard Cocke of the New Orleans Criminal District Court reversed the conviction of 60 persons found "guilty" in Municipal Court for disturbing the peace. On Feb. 6, 64 persons, most of them college students, were arrested at a party sponsored by Young Progressives. Evidence at the trial made it plain that the interracial character of the party was responsible for the arrests.

CAPITAL'S JIM CROW SCHOOLS


IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL ALL NEGRO CHILDREN GO TO SEGREGATED SCHOOLS—
AND ALL OTHER CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOLS DESIGNATED FOR WHITES.
OLD BUILDINGS
Negro schools are housed in older buildings—
And facilities are inferior to white schools.
CROWDED NEGRO SCHOOLS
In 1946-47 white schools were only three-quarters filled—
While 15 per cent of all colored children received only part-time instruction.
SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS
The pupil load of Negro teachers is from 12 to 30 per cent higher than white teachers.
SCHOOL FUNDS
$160.21
$126.52
White
Negro
In 1946-47 Negro schools received less operating funds per pupil than white schools.
HIGHER EDUCATION IN NATION'S CAPITAL
George Washington and Georgetown Universities, and Campus of American University, reach to foreign lands for students but will not admit Negroes.
THIS PLAYGROUND FOR WHITE ONLY
SEGREGATION BARS CHILDREN FROM PLAYING TOGETHER
When the flag of the United States goes up on a city playground in the capital today, children are forced apart by color. When the flag of the United States goes down, they play together without bigotry.

—From "Segregation in Washington"

Segregation in Washington

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche was offered and rejected the post of Assistant Secretary of State, the highest government post ever offered to a Negro. It is reported that the reason for the rejection is the reluctance of Dr. Bunche to have his children suffer the humiliation of attending a Jim Crow school in the nation's capital.

Recently Dr. Bunche was invited to address a small group of Middle East experts in a private room of the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington. When the hotel learned that a Negro was to be the guest speaker, the hotel canceled the reservation and returned the money deposited.

The shameful disgrace of segregation in our nation's capital has been dramatically and carefully spelled out for us in a 100-page pamphlet, "Segregation in Washington" replete with pictures and graphic charts, and published by The National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital. The study covers discrimination in many fields: housing, employment, education, health, recreation, etc.

In a chapter on housing it is pointed out that in "mixed neighborhoods where whites and Negroes lived in the same block, a house to house canvas showed that there was no friction. A woman born in the South who had lived in such a neighborhood for ten years, gave a typical answer. "The Negroes give no trouble. They're good neighbors . . . Yes, we get along fine."

Segregation is bolstered by the real estate interests who find that it is good business.

"It is not in the field of spontaneous human relationships that trouble occurs in Washington, but on a high policy level where the segregation of the Negro is planned as a matter of good business, and investments are made in the denial of his equal right to own property. It is not the poor whites who set the pattern, but men of acknowledged culture and refinement, the leaders of the community."

We can go backwards instead of forwards in human relationships. Such is the case in Washington. In 1889 all 11 hospitals serving the city told the U. S. Senate that no person was denied admission on account of race. Now a fourth of the 12 private hospitals exclude Negroes altogether, and the remainder allot them a limited number of beds. One winter morning in 1945 a young Negro woman, unable to reach the city hospital in time rushed to a church-supported hospital. Admission was refused. The baby was born on the sidewalk.

In 1872 during the brief period when people in the capital could vote, the elected Assembly of the District passed a law giving Negroes equal rights in public places. Stiff penalties were provided for violation.

Toward the close of the century this civil rights law mysteriously disappeared from the compiled statutes of the District, and it cannot be found in present codes. It would be interesting, since there is no record of its repeal, if this law were invoked in a civil rights case.

Readers of the **Southern Patriot** may secure copies of "Segregation in Washington" by sending 25c, add 10c for handling, to 808 Perdido St., New Orleans, La.